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Book Reviews

J. B. FRALEIGH, *A First Course in Abstract Algebra*, Addison–Wesley, 1976, 455 pp. Gifted expositors of mathematics are rare, indeed rarer than successful researchers. It is unfortunate that they are not rewarded as they deserve, in our present idiotic pecking order. All we can say is: Thank you, Professor Fraleigh. Your book is the clearest exposition of elementary algebra ever written. We hope you will give us more soon.

B. SEGRE, *Prodromi di geometria algebrica*, Cremonese, 1972, 412 pp. After fifty years of commutative algebra, we can go back to thinking geometrically without the undue fears that haunted our fathers. Here is a leisurely, lofty exposition of the classical Italian point of view written by the Master himself. Well worth learning Italian for.

K. G. BEAUCHAMP, *Walsh Functions and Their Applications*, Academic Press, 1975, 236 pp. The flirtation between Walsh function expansions and pattern recognition continues unabated. Somehow, one gets the feeling that it will not develop into a full-fledged love affair. Let the reader of this book judge for himself.

S. K. CAMPBELL, *Flaws and Fallacies in Statistical Thinking*, Prentice–Hall, 1974, 200 pp. The fact that books bearing this and similar titles appear with predictable regularity every four years should be a clear enough indication that the foundations of statistics need a closer look.

J.-P. LAFON, *Les formalismes fondamenatux de l'algèbre commutative*, Hermann, Paris, 1974, 260 pp. Commutative algebra is probably the central subject in pure mathematics today. Yet, no one has yet figured out how to begin teaching it, with motivation and courtesy toward the students. This watered-down Bourbaki is yet another confirmation of this sad state of affairs.

N. L. JOHNSON AND S. KOTZ, *Distributions in Statistics: Continuous Univariate Distributions*, Wiley, Vol. 3, 1972, 333 pp. The last volume of the most impressive collection of statistical distributions and their properties ever put together. Anyone who is at all interested in the stochastic world will benefit by simply leafing through the book in this collection. Indispensable in every mathematics library, public or private.

N. L. JOHNSON AND S. KOTZ, *Distributions in Statistics: Continuous Univariate Distributions*, Wiley/Houghton–Mifflin, Vol. 1, 1970, 300 pp.; Vol. 2, 1970, 306 pp. An awesome and imposing collection, thorough, easily consulted, and explicit in applications. On reading this book, one feels that the book of nature is written in terms of statistical distributions, each one representing a law of constancy. The mysterious interrelationships among continuous distributions, which are here displayed together perhaps for the first time, suggest a myriad problems and conjectures to mathematician and natural scientist alike. A vade mecum of all serious investigators of nature.

N. L. JOHNSON AND S. KOTZ, *Distributions in Statistics: Discrete Distributions*, Wiley/Houghton–Mifflin, 1969, 328 pp. Did you know that the minimum variance unbiased estimator of a Poisson random variable is given by the Stirling numbers? Or that the hypergeometric distribution can be used to estimate the size of animal populations from capture–recapture data? Did you ever try to set up a stochastic model for Fisher's exasperating logarithmic distribution? Or try to modify the Poisson distribution to account

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